(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether the performance of STC has been continuously declining; and

(d) if so, the concrete steps Government propose to take to boost export performance of STC?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE) : (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. STC is making vigorous efforts to increase its non-canalised exports by way of enrolling a number of associates to ensure supply sources. With a view to further strengthening the captive supply base, it plans to enter into tie-ups for export production in identified areas.

(c) and (d) Total turnover of STC during 1993-94 of Rs. 1117 crores registered a growth of 10% over its performance at the level of Rs. 1013 crores during 1992-93. Export turnover of Rs. 798 crores of STC during 1993-94 was higher by 45% as compared to its export turnover of Rs. 551 crores in 1992-93. Similarly, non-canalised import turnover also rose by 74% from the level of Rs. 39 crores in 1992-93 to Rs. 68 crores during 1993-94.

Expert Committee by Tobacco Board and Health Ministry

1771. SHRI V. HANUMANTHA RAO: Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Tobacco Board has made any contact with the Health Ministry to jointly appoint an Expert Committee as resolved by the Tobacco Board; and

(b) if so, what is the reaction of the Health Ministry in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE) : (a) and (b) The resolution of the Tobacco Board is available with the Ministry of Health. That Ministry has been requested to take appropriate action in this regard.

Role of Statutory Bodies under Ministry of Commerce

1772. SHRI YERRA NARAYANASWAMY: Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) what is the role of statutory bodies like Spices Board and Tobacco Board under the Ministry of Commerce;

(b) whether Government have downgraded the importance of such statutory bodies; and

(c) if so, the reasons thereof?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE): (a) The Spices Board was formed for the development and export of Spices and regulation of cardamom industry including cultivation of cardamom and matters connected therewith.

The Tobacco Board basides aiming to promote the development of tobacco industry performs functions such as regulation of production, curing and marketing of virginia tobacco, ensuring fair price to Virginia growers, promoting exports and sponsoring as well as coordinating, research activities for promotion of tobacco industry.

(b) No, Sir.

(c) Does not arise.

Utilisation of Tobacco Board in Improving Tobacco Economy

1773. SHRI YERRA NARAYANASWAMY: Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether any steps have been taken to utilise the Tobacco Board in improving the tobacco economy;

(b) whether Commerce Ministry gives adequate weightage to recommendations and resolutions of the Tobacco Board; and

(c) what are the guidelines with regard to implementing the suggestions and recommendations of Tobacco Board by Commerce Ministry?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE) : (a) The Tobacco Board is charged with the responsibility of promoting the tobacco industry and of regulating production and marketing of virginia tobacco to achieve the larger objective of ensuring remunerative returns to the tobacco growers. It strives to improve the quality of virginia tobacco in India and to promote exports of all varieties of tobacco and tobacco products.

(b) and (c) Recommendations of the Tobacco Board are given due consideration before any decisions in respect of this sector are taken.

Reconstitution of Tobacco Board

1774. SHRI YERRA NARAYANASWAMY: Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Tobacco Board is to be re-constituted in the near future;

(b) when the tenure of the present board is likely to end;

(c) whether Government will nominate representatives of tobacco growers from